

means for organizing and sustaining groups of people living together productively in comparative harmony. But self-government also, and very importantly, means the governing—that is the limiting--OF an individual self as distinguished from the governing of the body politic BY ourselves. Self-government means not only individuals banding together to make decisions about how they live and work together, in other words to express their communal decisions about running the society in which they live, but it also means decisions by individuals to govern—that is to limit or constrain—the wants and needs and appetites of themselves. In 21st Century America, the greatest challenge to democracy itself is the unwillingness of the haves to restrain our self-interest, to govern our own desires and wants, for our own sake as well as for the sake of the public interest in supplying the wants and needs of the have-nots.

Interest group self-advocacy is the dominant paradigm in both academic and practical politics. Reduced to its extreme, it is not much different from Hobbes' "war of all against all," waged with sometimes more and sometimes less civility. The aim of the antagonists is to get more of the pie for ME or for an US that is less than society as a whole, others who share my condition professionally or ethnically or racially or socio-economically.

Where is the force for the common good, and how does one define the common good? Where is the source of advocacy in behalf of US as a whole as opposed to ME?

The aim of ethical discourse has always been to move people from acting in their narrow self-interest first to a broader self-interest, which Adam Smith called "enlightened self-interest," and ultimately to what is not self-interest at all but the interest of society as a whole. While you may think of Adam Smith primarily as the author of *The Wealth of Nations*, never forget that he believed his more important volume was *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which he spelled out the critical importance of ethical and altruistic behavior in society.

Our democracy worked very well for a century or more in the small towns of